



CMAP

City of Waukegan Planning Priorities Report

July 2012

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.

Local Technical Assistance program

In October 2010, CMAP was awarded a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist with the implementation of GO TO 2040. With funding from this grant, CMAP has launched the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, which involves providing assistance to communities across the Chicago metropolitan region to undertake planning projects that advance the principles of GO TO 2040.

CMAP is currently working with 70 local governments, nonprofits, and intergovernmental organizations to address local issues at the intersection of transportation, land use, and housing, including the natural environment, economic growth, and community development. In the first call for projects in early 2011, CMAP received over 220 proposals from more than 130 municipalities, counties, interjurisdictional groups, and nongovernmental organizations.

Waukegan's application

The City of Waukegan was among this large pool of applicants. In its application, the City outlined 8 planning activities in which the City was seeking technical assistance from CMAP. The agency was pleased to identify the City of Waukegan request for technical assistance as a priority to be pursued through the Local Technical Assistance program. However, CMAP determined that it would need to work with the City to determine which project, among the many that were

INTRODUCTION

submitted, would be most appropriate to receive technical assistance from the Local Technical Assistance program.

A two-step strategy

Following preliminary discussions between staff from CMAP and the City of Waukegan, it was concluded that assistance from the LTA program should be divided into two steps. Beginning in November 2011, CMAP staff would first study Waukegan's many planning needs and initiatives, to determine prioritization for future assistance from the Local Technical Assistance program. The deliverable would be a "planning priorities report" whose recommendations, once approved by the City Council, would set the stage for LTA assistance to begin.

Step one: planning priorities report

CMAP staff commenced its study of Waukegan's past, present, and priorities for the future. The project team examined data from many sources, to better understand the City's demographics, housing, educational achievement, employment, and economic health. City staff provided the team with a thorough compilation of past plans, maps, and other planning documents that gave context to our current assessment and recommendations.

In the end, our conversations with Waukegan's Mayor and every alderman on the City Council—along with City staff and other stakeholders in the community—became the most

influential component of our analysis. Opinions on Waukegan's past, present, and future planning priorities were diverse and remarkably frank, offering candid assessments of the City's frustrations and hopes, challenges and opportunities. While the perspective of each person was unique, the sum of these conversations yielded common themes—and even areas of common ground—which led to the recommendations in this report. Our primary recommendation is that CMAP assist Waukegan with local planning for a specific commercial corridor/district—located outside of Waukegan's downtown and lakefront.

This report is a distillation of our research, findings, and recommendations for the Local Technical Assistance program. It is organized as follows:

- Context (key indicators, elements of Waukegan's urban landscape, zoning)
- Planning milestones
- Interviews (stakeholders interviewed, main themes from interviews)
- Recommendations for CMAP Local Technical Assistance program
- Next steps

CONTEXT: A FEW KEY INDICATORS

Population, 2010: **89,078**

Change from 2000: **+1.3%** (+9.2% in Lake County)

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census

Median Age: **30.5** (37 in Lake County)

Source: 2010 Census

Under 19 years: **33%** (30% in Lake County)

20 to 34 years: **24%** (18% in Lake County)

35 to 49 years: **21%** (23% in Lake County)

50 to 64 years: **15%** (19% in Lake County)

65 to 79 years: **5%** (8% in Lake County)

80 years and over: **2%** (3% in Lake County)

Source: 2010 Census

Race and Ethnicity, 2010:

White: **22%** (-29% since 2000, -3% in Lake County)

Latino: **53%** (+21%, +51% in Lake County)

African-American: **18%** (-0.7%, 8% in Lake County)

Asian: **4%** (+20%, +77% in Lake County)

Other: **2%** (+14%, +35% in Lake County)

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census

Graduation rate - Waukegan High School, 2011: **68%**

Source: Illinois Interactive Report Card, Northern Illinois University

Unemployed, Feb. 2012: **15.8%** (10.5% in Lake County)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Not in labor force, 16 + older: **30%** (28% in Lake County)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Median Income, 2010: **\$47,987** (\$78,948 in Lake County)

Income less than \$25,000: **22%** (6% in Lake County)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Housing Median Value, 2010: **\$165,200** (\$287,300 in Lake County)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Housing Median Sales Price, March – May 2012: **\$54,000**

Source: Trulia

91% housing occupied (93% in Lake County)

9% housing vacant (7% in Lake County)

Source: 2010 Census

Foreclosure rate, May 2012: **1 in every 118 housing units**

(Lake County rate: 1 in every 162 housing units)

Source: RealtyTrac

53% owner-occupied (77% in Lake County)

47% renter-occupied (23% in Lake County)

Source: 2010 Census

Housing Types:

Single, detached: **53%** (68% in Lake County)

Single, attached: **7%** (11% in Lake County)

2 units: **8%** (3% in Lake County)

3 to 4 units: **4%** (3% in Lake County)

5+ units: **27%** (14% in Lake County)

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Transportation, Mode Share:

Drive alone: **71%** (77% in Lake County)

Carpool: **19%** (9% in Lake County)

Transit: **4%** (4% in Lake County)

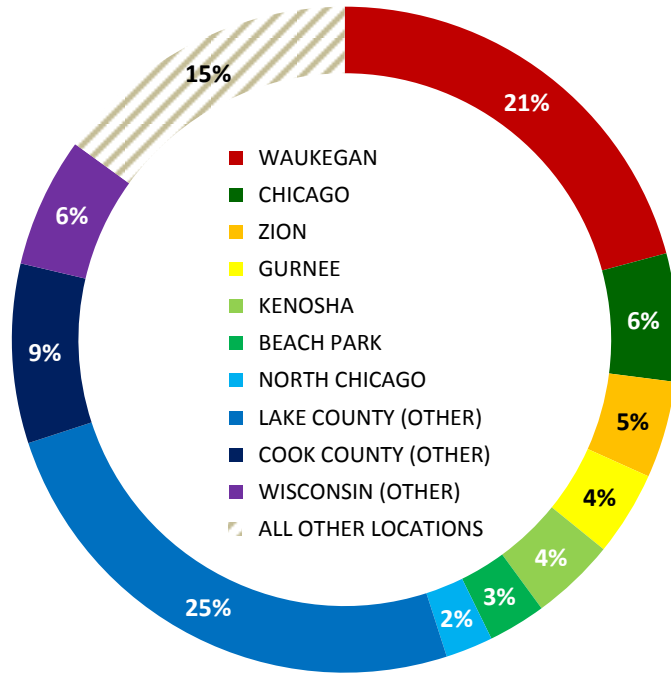
Walk: **1%** (2% in Lake County)

Other: **4%** (7% in Lake County)

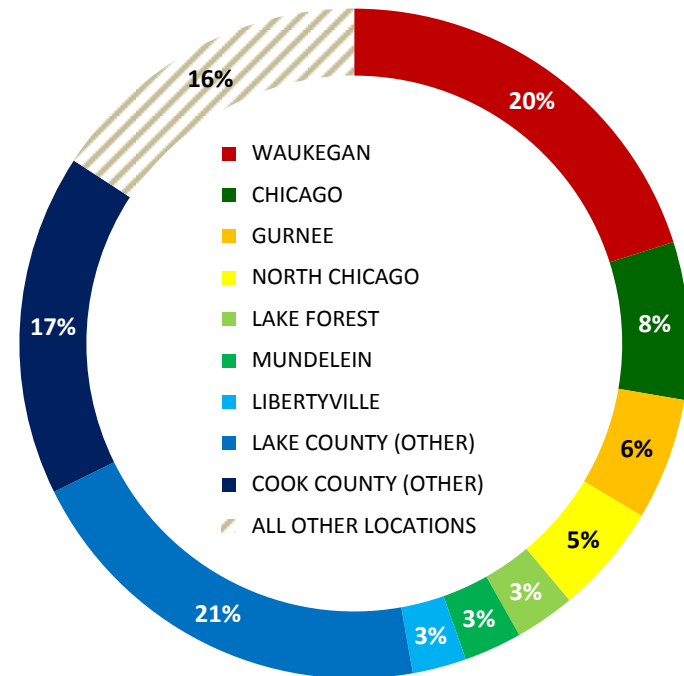
Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

CONTEXT: A FEW KEY INDICATORS

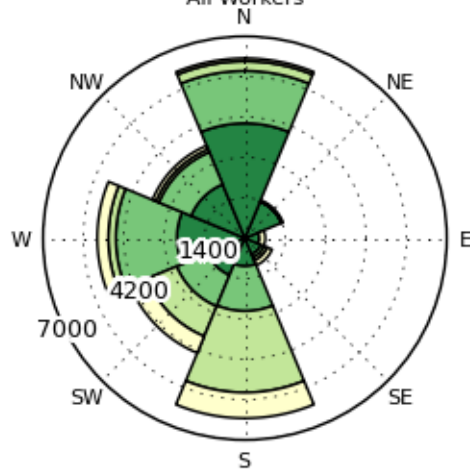
Where do Waukegan's workers live?



Where do Waukegan's residents work?



Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2010
All Workers



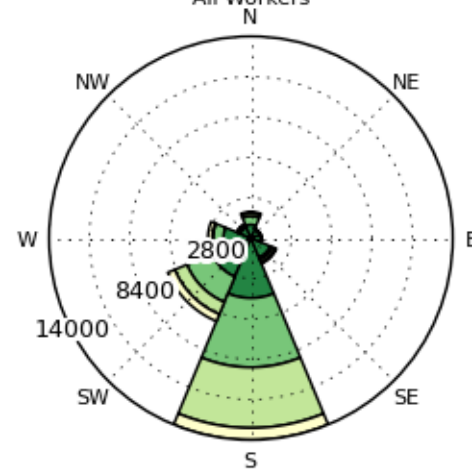
Job counts by distance and direction, 2010

LEFT: Working in Waukegan
RIGHT: Living in Waukegan

- less than 10 miles
- 10 to 24 miles
- 25 to 50 miles
- greater than 50 miles

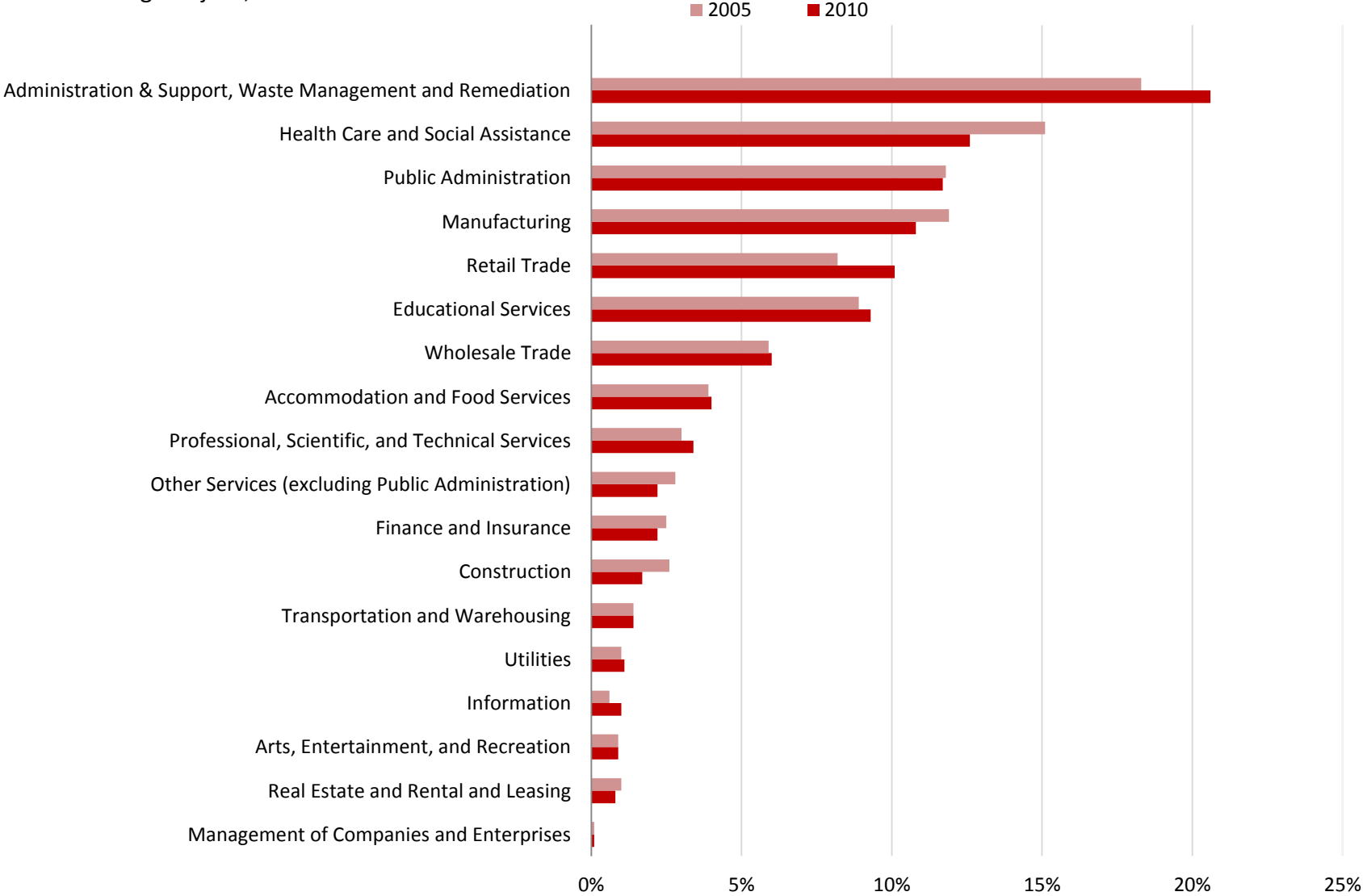
Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2010
All Workers



CONTEXT: A FEW KEY INDICATORS

Waukegan's jobs, 2005 - 2010



CONTEXT: ELEMENTS OF WAUKEGAN'S URBAN LANDSCAPE

STREETSCAPE DEVELOPMENT AREA and KARCHER
ARTSPACE LOFTS

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICTS
(approximate location)

LOW-INCOME HOUSING

PEAT DUNE SWALE (VERY RARE ECOSYSTEM)

AMSTUTZ EXPRESSWAY TERMINATION

MAIN INDUSTRIAL AREAS ALONG LAKEFRONT
IN VARIOUS STATES OF REMEDIATION

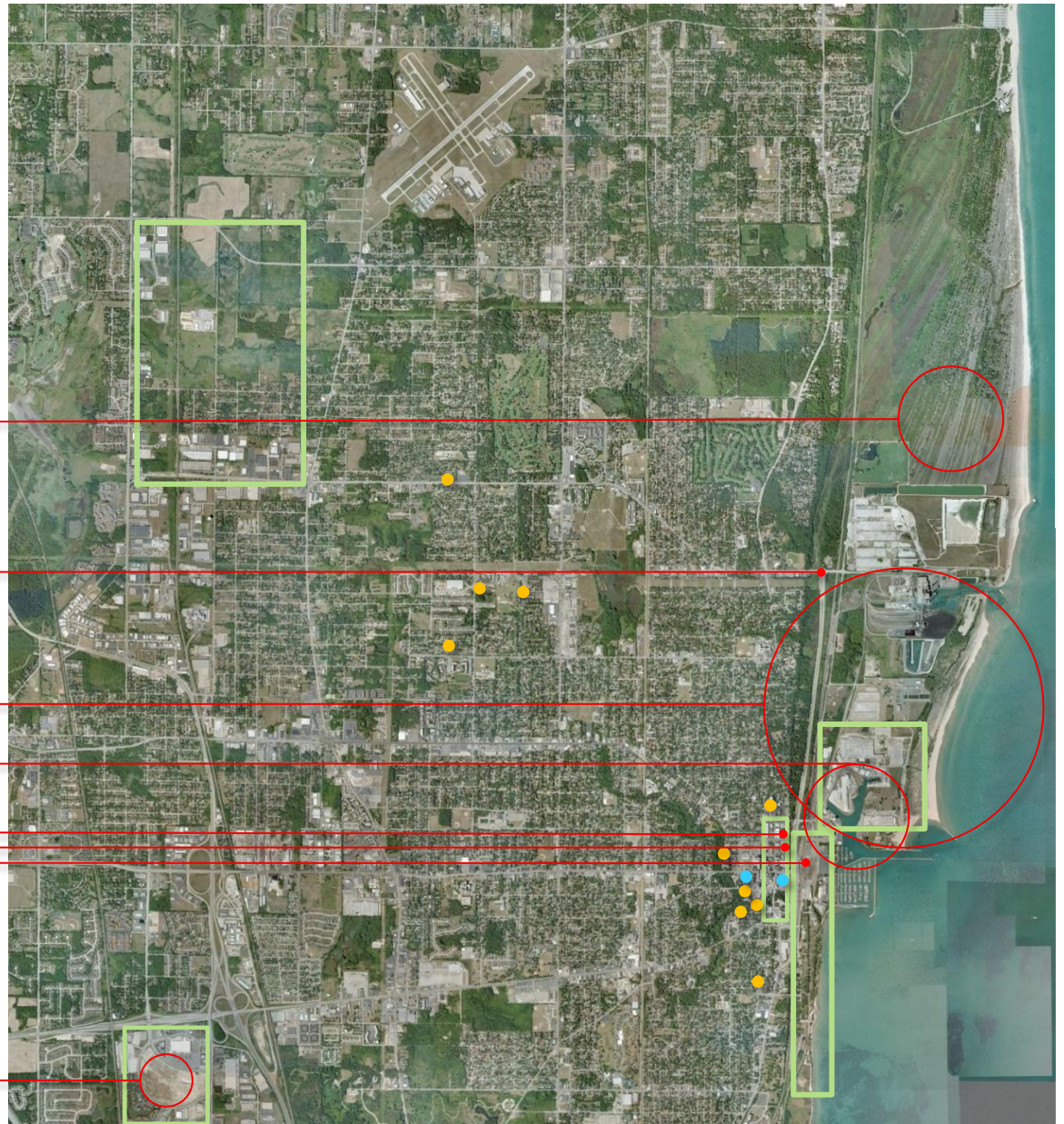
DEEP-WATER HARBOR

COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY























GENESSE THEATRE

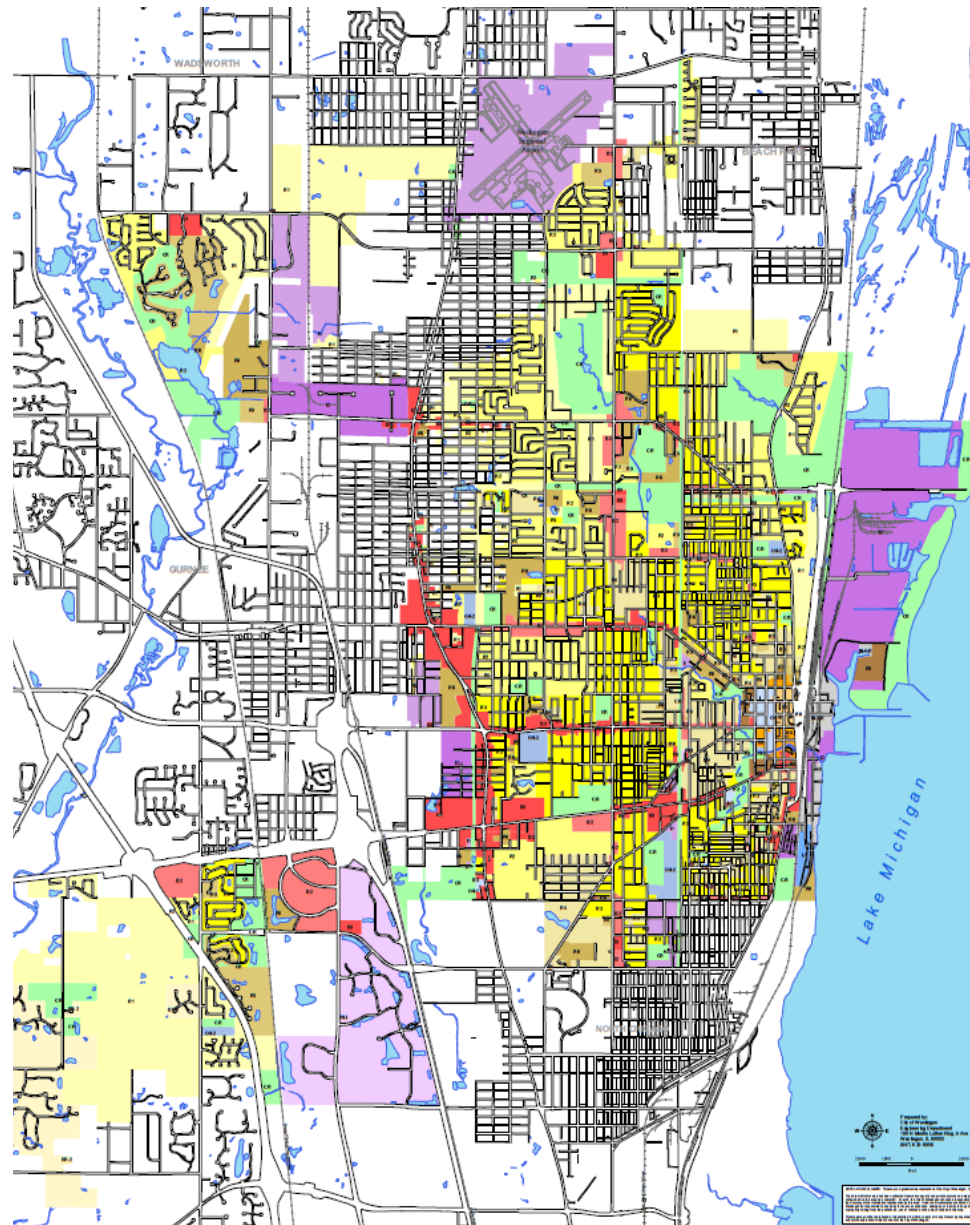
METRA STATION

PROPOSED SITE OF NEW CASINO



Legend

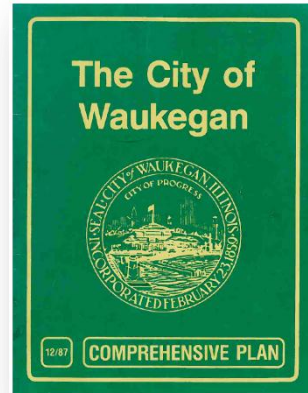
	CR Conservation/Recreation
	ER-2 Estate Residence (Minimum lot size 40,000 sf)
	R1 Single-family Residence (Minimum lot size 10,000 sf)
	R2 Single-family Residence (Minimum lot size 7,200 sf)
	R3 Single-family Residence (Minimum lot size 6,000 sf)
	R4 One and Two-family Residence (Minimum lot size 6,000 sf)
	R5 Limited General Residence (Minimum lot size 6,000 sf)
	R6 General Residence (Minimum lot size 6,000 sf)
	R7 General Residence (Minimum lot size 6,000 sf)
	R8 General Residence (Minimum lot size 6,000 sf)
	B1 Neighborhood Convenience
	B2 Community Shopping
	B3 General Commercial
	B4 Central Business
	B5 Central Service
	M-CR Marine-Commercial Recreation
	O/I-1 Office/Institutional
	O/I-2 Office/Institutional
	R/LI Research/Light Industrial
	I1 Restricted Industrial
	I2 General Industrial
	L1 South Lakefront



PLANNING MILESTONES

City of Waukegan, Comprehensive Plan (1987)

A local comprehensive plan is the vision of what the community wants to become and the steps needed to meet that goal. The existing Comprehensive Plan for Waukegan was completed in 1987, updating the previous plan from 1980. The City Council amended the plan in 2003 to incorporate its new Master Plan for downtown and the lakefront. Otherwise, the plan has not been updated in over 24 years.



The plan provides a snapshot of Waukegan at the time, projections for demographic change, and a variety of recommendations for change in the coming decades. There were twelve major proposals in the plan:

- Airport and industrial park expansion (in areas west and southwest of the Waukegan airport).
- South Harbor expansion and waterfront residential.
- Hotel-convention center (at the intersection of I-94 and Route 120 (Belvidere Road)).
- Office-industrial expansion (on undeveloped land adjacent to I-94, south of the interchange with Route 120).
- Roads, bridges, interchanges and new commuter stations (extension of lakefront freeway to Yorkhouse Road, and Milwaukee Railroad to Lakehurst Shopping Center, downtown Gurnee and beyond).
- Housing proposals (including more senior housing in the downtown, harbor residential apartments, expanded use of “planned unit development” process).
- Commercial and business expansion (New shopping centers at Sheridan Road and Yorkhouse, Yorkhouse and Green Bay, Green Bay and Belvidere, Belvidere and McAree Road and along Belvidere and O’Plaine).
- Annexation (of unincorporated land at the edge of the City – 8,000 acres in 1987, with over 3,000 acres vacant, undeveloped, or in agricultural use).
- Population (the plan suggested doubling the City’s population—approximately 70,000 in 1987—through expansion and permit development).
- Parks, open space and recreation (addition of approximately 1,000 additional acres of parkland).

- Zoning amendments and historic districts.
- Downtown redevelopment and senior citizen housing.

RTA Intermodal Transit Facility Study (2000)

Waukegan partnered with the Regional Transit Authority to create a conceptual station design that could accommodate multiple different modes of travel and reinforce a pedestrian link between the city's downtown and its lakefront. The study recognized the potential of a revitalized station as a commuter link to downtown Chicago as well as the front door to visitors from across the region.

Three schemes with cost estimates were developed and a final scheme was chosen as the first step in a longer term plan that integrated the essential components of all three. This station design included eight central elements, including the construction of a pedestrian bridge on Madison Street to connect to a new Metra station.

Urban Land Institute, Advisory Services Panel Report on Waukegan, Illinois (2002)

For Waukegan's 1,400 acre lakefront, the panel concluded that lakefront housing has the ability to attract the growing middle- to upper-income empty-nester households. It also highlighted the importance of confronting Waukegan's image problem with a strong message that lakefront industry is being phased out in favor of a harbor city.

The panel recommended that the city:

- Create a harbor city on its lakefront with a mixture of residential, commercial, and open space.
- Phase out heavy industry, with sites remediated to allow for a mixture of future uses.
- Address the lack of connections between the downtown business district and the lakefront.



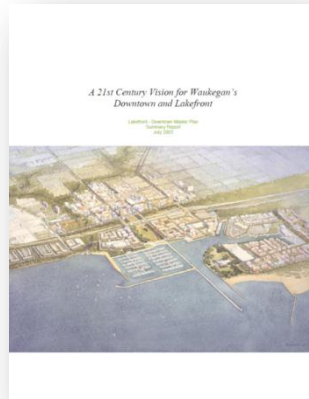
To implement the vision, recommended projects were categorized into two stages, the first having a 10-year horizon. In order to accomplish these projects, the panel identified four strategies that are necessary for implementation:

- Establish a New Harbor Redevelopment Corporation.
- Address environmental challenges.
- Produce a detailed master plan.
- Arrange for finance.

PLANNING MILESTONES

A 21st Century Vision for Waukegan's Downtown and Lakefront (2003)

Following recommendations made by the ULI National Advisory Panel, the City of Waukegan embarked on creating a Lakefront and Downtown Master Plan. The plan (created by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill) sets out a vision of a vibrant city center, lively waterfront neighborhoods, and an ecologically restored north lakefront.



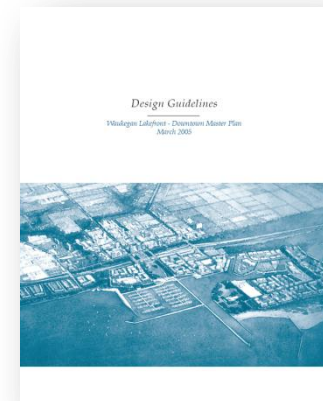
The plan recommends:

- Strong gateways from the regional rail and road networks.
- A publicly accessible lakefront with a trail system.
- A mixed-use downtown and lakefront with industrial uses relocated to other sectors of the city.
- Reconnecting the downtown and lakefront with the removal of road and rail barriers, and the creation of a street network and transit center.

The plan provides a vision for the five sub-areas of the study area, with specific implementation steps, as well as potential designs for key development areas: Downtown, the South Lakefront, the Harborfront, North Harbor, and the North Lakefront.

Waukegan Redevelopment Area Design Guidelines (2005)

Design guidelines were prepared by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for the City of Waukegan to expand and clarify the concepts put forth in the 2003 Waukegan Lakefront-Downtown Master Plan. Intended for use by both regulating agencies and private developers, the design guidelines outline specific regulations for the districts, building types, streets, and open spaces within the downtown and lakefront areas.



The stated purpose of the design guidelines include:

- Define the overall design approach for districts and building types.

PLANNING MILESTONES

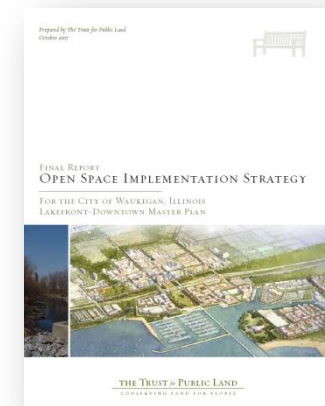
- Confirm community goals for the design and quality of new development.
- Establish clear rules for neighborhoods, blocks, lots, buildings, streets, and open spaces.
- Provide clarity to private development interests about the physical and design framework within which they will be required to work.
- Provide confidence to private development interests that neighboring properties will follow common standards.
- Provide a promotional tool for inclusion in requests for proposal.
- Unite the city in its evaluation of development proposals.

Open Space Implementation Strategy (2007)

The Trust for Public Land created a strategy for implementing the open space elements of the Lakefront-Downtown Master Plan. The strategy reviewed the relevant set of sites based on a number of factors, such as proximity to development properties, public ownership, land control strategy and opportunity, and funding opportunities and then prioritized which properties the city should focus attention on.

The strategy also recommended a series of steps to transition into implementation of the plan and identified potential funding sources for specific types of open space projects. The strategy identified these four top priority projects:

- City Beach: Given public ownership and its potential to stimulate further revitalization, the strategy recommended immediate attention on redeveloping the City's beach area according to the master plan.
- Waukegan River Ravine: While there are a variety of landowners, more than half of the ravine system is under public control and easements or other agreements could be worked out for the rest. The Waukegan Park District or the Lake County Forest Preserve District could be the long-term stewards of the system.
- North Lakefront District: Both the North Shore Sanitary District and Midwest Generation are long term owners



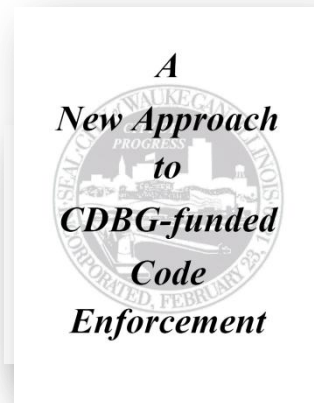
PLANNING MILESTONES

the city could work with to develop open space and restoration plans, with limited access.

- Mouth of the Waukegan River: This area is the highest priority for gaining land control given the master plans goals and the number of private owners involved.

A New Approach to CDBG-Funded Code Enforcement (2011)

The City developed a plan to address code enforcement activities eligible for funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.



CDBG regulations authorize "code enforcement in deteriorating or deteriorated areas where such enforcement together with public improvements, rehabilitation, and services to be provided, may be expected to arrest the decline of the area." To comply with CDBG requirements, the plan defines "deterioration" as *"a lowering in quality of the condition or appearance of landscape or of any structure or*

parts thereof . . . characterized by holes, breaks, rot, crumbling, cracking, peeling, rusting, or any other evidence of physical decay, disease, neglect, lack of maintenance or any other evidence of insufficient or inadequate maintenance, which in turn leads to cases of blight."

Waukegan's definition of deterioration guided its identification of areas to be targeted for strategic revitalization. Data sources for this assessment included utility shut-offs, field surveys of vacant and blighted properties, registered vacant structures, foreclosures, auction sales, the City's Govern property database, and determination of HUD Abandonment Risk Score through geospatial data analysis. The six revitalization areas were:

- Williamsburg-Westmoreland Neighborhood
- Massena-Poplar Neighborhood
- Washington Park Neighborhood
- Roosevelt Park Neighborhood
- Eighth Street Neighborhood
- Melrose-Fulton Neighborhood

The plan identifies three primary strategies for addressing problems in these revitalization areas:

- Work with agencies to help facilitate the purchase and rehabilitation of homes and residential properties that

are abandoned or foreclosed(in order to sell, rent or redevelop)

- Demolish blighted structures/vacant housing units(that have been identified as a public nuisance due to conditions such as dilapidation that would prevent cost-effective rehabilitation)
- Neighborhood Sweeps (quarterly walkthroughs to spot exterior violations—such as trash, vacant homes, vehicles in disrepair, overgrown lawns, and graffiti--through quarterly walkthroughs, and notify residents of those issues).

The overall goals of the effort will be to:

- Improve the visual appearance of the revitalization area neighborhoods.
- Assist property owners with the restoration of residential housing.
- Increase the property values of the revitalization areas by improving the deteriorated and blighted properties.
- Increase owner occupancy within the revitalization areas to create more stable and less transient neighborhoods.

INTERVIEWS: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Robert Sabonjian, Mayor (since 2009)

Entire City Council (nine aldermen)

Noelle Kischer-Lepper, Director of Policy and Projects

Russ Tomlin, Director of Building, Planning and Development (we also interviewed other members of Planning Department)

Ron Laubach, City Engineer

Mike Higbee, Development Concepts, Inc. (City's economic development consultant)

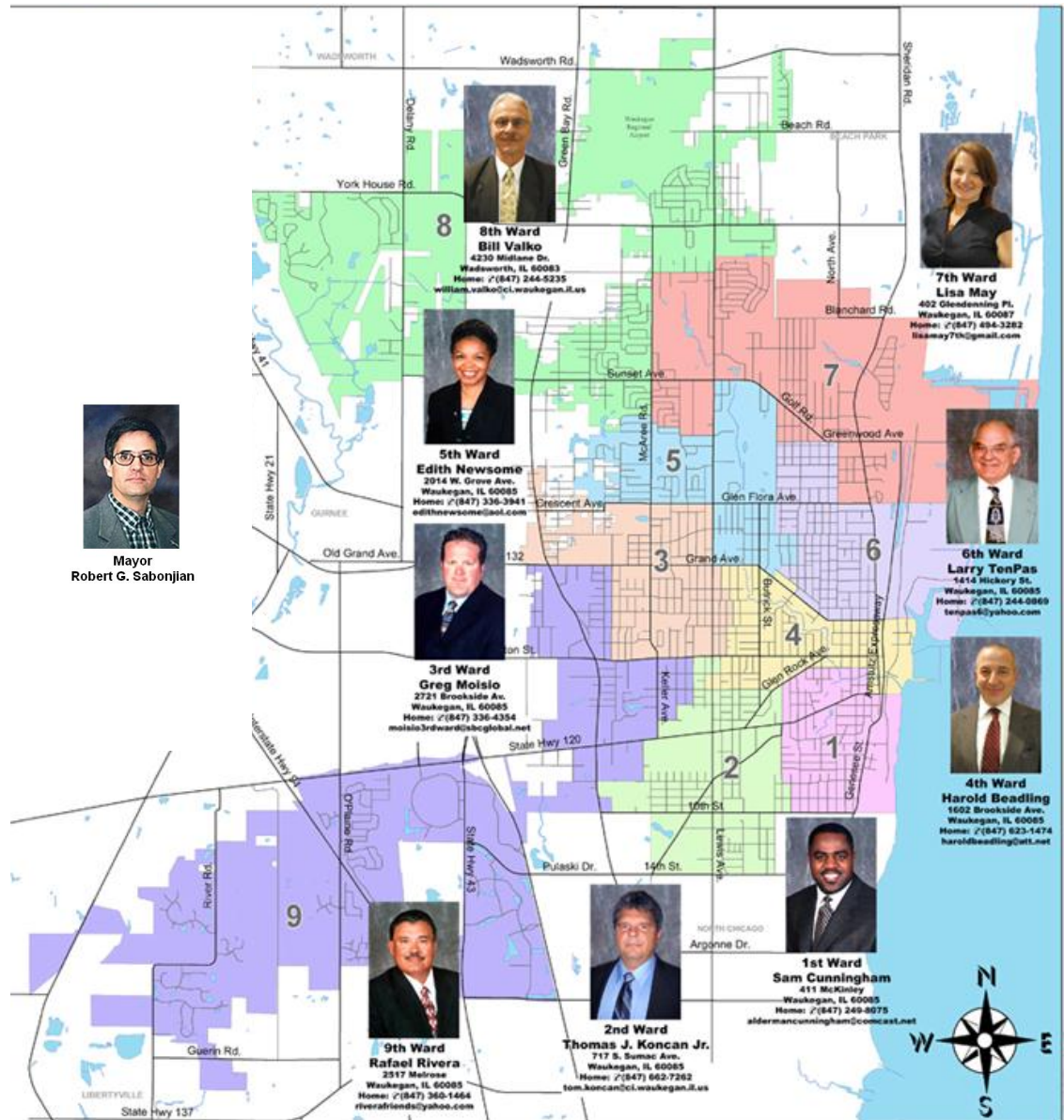
Susana Figueroa, City Liaison to Latino Community

Jean "Susie" Schreiber, Chair, Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Council

Kent Moon, Lakeview Construction (developer)



Mayor
Robert G. Sabonjian



“We have a perception problem.”

Waukegan is seen as having too many problems to be an attractive place to live, build a development, or open a business.

- High crime (especially violent crime)
- High poverty
- Vacant, polluted industrial areas
- Lack of parent confidence in City’s high schools
- Anemic or non-existent business climate, especially in the heart of the City
- Hard to do business with the City / the City doesn’t know what it wants to do, or how to proceed.

Waukegan has multiple housing problems.

- High number of foreclosures and vacancies
- Big problems with upkeep, especially bank-owned properties
- Homeowners seeing little—or no—increase in the value of their homes.
- Over-concentration of public housing in a few neighborhoods

2003 Downtown-Lakefront Plan

Most people interviewed still admired the vision and broad recommendations of the plan, but noted that...

- It is almost ten years old, and will need to be updated.
- There is a sense that the City failed to act when the economy was much better.
- Several aldermen expressed exasperation with the amount of money that has gone into planning for the downtown and lakefront—“with nothing to show for it.”

Waukegan residents have poor access to two of the City’s greatest assets—the Metra station and the lakefront.

- Both are located below the bluff and across the Amstutz Expressway.
- Accessing the City’s beaches and lakefront parks located across the tracks and on the far side of Waukegan’s desolate industrial areas.

Doing business with the City is very difficult.

The hassles inherent in trying to build a new development, redevelop a property, or open a new business in Waukegan aren’t worth the trouble.

INTERVIEWS: MAIN THEMES

- The bad experiences of developers and business owners have led to bad word-of-mouth.
- Doing business with neighboring communities, as well as Kenosha, is much easier.
- Anecdotes were offered of times when the City has made a deal with a developer or business owner before working through the necessary details, leading to unplanned subsidies, tax breaks, etc.

Waukegan residents leave the City to do most of their shopping (in Gurnee and even Kenosha).

- Even in areas where there is a concentration of very successful small businesses, larger stores have not chosen to open in Waukegan, so residents don't have a choice but to take their purchasing power outside of the City.

Many parents in Waukegan lack confidence in the City's two high schools, which are overwhelmed by problems.

- This has led middle class families (of all races) to leave Waukegan once their kids finish middle school.
- The combination of the problems of Waukegan's schools and the loss of industrial jobs pose a threat to

Waukegan's future. New workforce training opportunities are needed.

College of Lake County

The college has not brought a lot of activity—or revenue—to Waukegan's downtown.

- Some aldermen believe that the City has been too generous with the land and financial incentives given to CLC (especially as CLC doesn't pay taxes).
- The current curriculum is very limited (e.g. "a lot of classes for people with moving violations").
- CLC's upcoming curriculum (adding programs in culinary arts and others) generally raised hopes for increased foot traffic, supporting more businesses downtown.

Possibility of new casino

There seems to be fairly broad support among the aldermen for a new casino located at Fountain Square.

- To varying degrees, they are hopeful that a casino will bring new revenue to Waukegan as well as help spur economic development in the vicinity.
- The Mayor does not support a casino, but acknowledges that the aldermen do, and believes that

if there is a casino in Lake County, there should be revenue sharing with Waukegan.

Poor state of City's infrastructure

The poor condition of the City's roads, bridges, water, sewer, etc. was a frequent topic for several aldermen.

Topics rarely mentioned in interviews

The following planning areas, originally suggested as potential areas for assistance from CMAP's Local Technical Assistance and Community Planning programs, were rarely mentioned as a priority in our interviews:

- Railroad relocation planning
- Open space implementation planning
- Coordination of development with neighboring communities
- Green development demonstration project
- 1987 Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Ordinance
- Amtrak – Fountain Square station feasibility study
- Bike-pedestrian planning

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CMAP LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Waukegan's downtown and lakefront are the City's greatest potential assets, but a lot of time, attention, and money has already been devoted to this area, and what needs to be done over the long term is relatively clear.

Much of the groundwork that needs to be done in the near term is not well-suited to the LTA program (such as moving railroads, construction of a new station, altering the Amstutz Expressway, better connecting downtown to the lakefront). Especially in the current economy, Waukegan needs a break from new large-scale planning initiatives. It needs some tangible "wins." Below, a primary recommendation for action is described at some length, and two supplementary recommendations are also noted near the end of this document.

Primary recommendation

CMAP recommends that the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program assist Waukegan with local planning for a commercial corridor/district in a neighborhood located outside of Waukegan's downtown and lakefront. Depending on timing of City approval, the project would begin in fall of 2012, to be completed within one year.

This idea was welcomed by every single person interviewed. Several seemed to expect CMAP would want to focus on the downtown-lakefront area, but were enthusiastic—or even

relieved—at the idea of CMAP focusing its attention on other areas of the City (and many found it to be a refreshing idea).

Successful commercial corridors/districts foster opportunities for business owners and other entrepreneurs, generating much-needed entry-level jobs, workforce training opportunities, and convenient access to goods and services for neighborhood residents—all of which are needed in the City of Waukegan. We recommend developing a plan—including a detailed implementation component—for a commercial corridor/district that shows promise and has the potential to develop into an economically dynamic and successful area.

The primary objective would be to build upon existing assets, however small, and identify opportunities for economic development that are grounded in the real world and correspond with the needs of the people who live, work, and do business in the area. Overall, CMAP seeks to work with the community, together achieving a tangible "win" for Waukegan which, ideally, can serve as a model that can be replicated elsewhere in the City.

CMAP will apply a wide variety of resources to this project, including staff planners, outreach specialists, data analysts, and geographic information systems specialists. In addition, CMAP maintains close partnerships with other agencies and

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CMAP LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

organizations across the region, and will seek the expertise and assistance of relevant partners on this exciting project.

Site recommendation for a commercial corridor/district planning area

Taking into consideration the comments of stakeholders we interviewed, CMAP identified potential sites for the commercial corridor/district planning area. The sites were selected based upon a range of criteria, including:

- Business activity
- Traffic volume
- Commercial building stock
- Land use mix

- Transit access
- Number of residents and workers in the vicinity
- Proximity to open space
- Crime rates
- Accessibility to fresh food

Of the sites considered, CMAP recommends the Washington Street commercial corridor, from the Waukegan River ravine to Lewis Avenue, as a well-situated, high-potential site. With several small businesses, two schools, a bus route, a bike path, and adjacencies to downtown and residential neighborhoods, CMAP believes that this commercial area would benefit from and respond well to the proposed planning process.



RECOMMENDATIONS: PLANNING PROCESS

Commercial corridor/district planning process

Once CMAP and the City of Waukegan have finalized the selection of the planning area, the project team will determine the actual steps of the planning process, tailored to the unique context and needs of the commercial corridor/district.

However, in anticipation of the next phase of work, CMAP has initiated a study of best practices for the revitalization of commercial corridors/districts. Drawing on neighborhood planning processes being developed by Waukegan's planning staff, as well as the past experience of CMAP, our partners, and numerous case studies from across the country, we have begun to identify potential steps in the upcoming commercial corridor/district planning process. The process will produce an implementable plan to help the City of Waukegan improve the planning area, addressing a range of neighborhood issues, such as economic vitality, graffiti, and walkability.

The following broad overview is intended as a starting point, and will be modified to fit the preferences of the City and the needs of the selected planning area.



RECOMMENDATIONS: PLANNING PROCESS – PHASE 1

Project initiation

Define planning area

1. Choose (and define boundaries of) commercial corridor/district planning area, using selection criteria.

Existing conditions research – initial

Preparatory research

1. Compile existing research, market studies, traffic counts/transit data, and planning reports for the commercial corridor/district and surrounding neighborhood.

2. (Optional) conduct a series of brief telephone interviews with local stakeholders to find out who is currently working on programs or projects that impact the commercial corridor/district.

Community outreach – identification of stakeholders; evaluation of assets and challenges

Identify key stakeholders

1. Identify key stakeholders in the commercial corridor/district
Question to be answered: *Who has a stake in the success of the district?*

Form and convene oversight committee

1. Identify and convene a small group of key stakeholders representing different perspectives (ward alderman, City staff, merchants, church leaders and other community leaders, residents, local nonprofits, etc.) to help advise and guide the commercial corridor/district planning process.

Community meeting #1: evaluate current assets and challenges – residents

1. Present background data regarding existing businesses, vacancies, and market demand (gathered in existing conditions research).

2. Have meeting attendees complete an exercise in which they identify “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats” in the commercial corridor/district.

Questions to be answered: *What are the district’s assets and challenges? What is the current mix of retail tenants? Where else do people shop and why? How does the district compare with its competition?*

Community meeting #2: evaluate current assets and challenges – business owners (if necessary)

RECOMMENDATIONS: PLANNING PROCESS – PHASE 2

Existing conditions research – in-depth

Walking survey – inventory of businesses and commercial space

1. Conduct an inventory of buildings and businesses to record information about the existing businesses, the condition of buildings, and any vacant sites.

Questions to be answered: *What types of businesses are located here? How much commercial space is available? What percentage of space is vacant or underutilized?*

Compile neighborhood market profile

1. Drawing on information gathered from community meeting(s), complete more thorough analysis of demographic and economic data, to provide a profile of the local market, including the market potential of the commercial corridor/district.

Questions to be answered: *Where do most customers come from? Who are the local consumers? How much disposable income do they have? Where do they currently spend it? What are their unmet needs?*

2. Prepare and disseminate surveys to appropriate stakeholders in order to “ground-truth” market data.

Walking survey – streetscape conditions

1. Conduct an assessment of the quality of streetscape conditions in the district including a general evaluation of the parking opportunities and the condition of sidewalks, streets, street furniture, and trees.

Questions to be answered: *What are the conditions of the buildings and storefronts? What is the condition of the streets, sidewalks and other public space? How is parking provided in the district?*

Collect transportation data

1. Gather and analyze relevant transportation data for the commercial corridor/district, including traffic counts, transit ridership, pedestrian activity, and bike ridership.
2. Collect additional information on transportation choices and needs through interviews and/or surveys with residents, workers, and business owners in corridor/district.

Collect crime and safety data

1. Gather and analyze local crime statistics for the area. Collect additional information on safety and the perception of safety through merchant and/or consumer surveys.

Questions to be answered: *What current conditions make people feel unsafe? What can be done to improve the safety and the perception of safety?*

Draft existing conditions report

1. Prepare draft existing conditions report that summarizes the information gathered and generated in the previous steps.
2. Present to oversight committee for review. Modify draft report in response to comments, as necessary.

Deliverable: existing conditions report

Community outreach – visioning

Community visioning workshop

1. Conduct community workshop to identify shared vision for the future of the commercial corridor/district. Participants are also given opportunity to identify potential activities necessary to achieve the vision.

Questions to be answered: *How does the community envision the district in the future? Who will be the customers? What will draw customers to the district?*

Refine vision and identify implementation strategies

1. Draft vision statement(s), based upon results of community visioning workshop.

2. Oversight committee reviews draft vision statement(s), and begins to identify implementation activities to achieve the vision. Prioritize potential activities.

Questions to be answered: *What needs to change in the commercial corridor/district? What are the best opportunities for change to pursue given the needs and resources?*

Identify desired businesses and identify opportunity sites

1. Based on community feedback, develop a list of desired business types. Complement this with a market analysis to determine the feasibility of businesses of these types locating in the area.

Questions to be answered: *What types of retail tenants are desired? Can appropriate space be provided for these tenants? Are there opportunities for new development?*

RECOMMENDATIONS: PLANNING PROCESS – DRAFT PLAN

Drafting of plan

Draft plan

1. Prepare draft commercial corridor/district plan, based on the existing conditions analysis and priorities identified in visioning component of the planning process.
2. Present draft commercial corridor/district plan to oversight committee. Make modifications to draft plan as necessary.
3. Present draft commercial corridor/district plan to general public at open house event.

Deliverable: draft commercial corridor/district plan

The actual components of the commercial corridor/district plan will depend on the results of the planning process, but may include recommendations for:

- types of business to target, and appropriate opportunity sites
- business attraction, retention, and improvement
- potential redevelopment sites/concepts
- transportation improvements (automobile, transit, pedestrian, bicycle)
- urban design and streetscape improvements
- implementation strategies (short, mid, and long-term), including identification of lead implementers
- indicators and data for outcome tracking

Final plan preparation

Prepare final plan

1. Prepare final commercial corridor/district plan, responding to comments of oversight committee and public.
2. Submit and present final plan to oversight committee for approval.
3. Submit and present final plan to Waukegan Development Commission, Judiciary Committee, and City Council for approval.

Deliverable: final commercial corridor/district plan

RECOMMENDATIONS: POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Examples of potential implementation strategies

A wide variety of strategies could be chosen to help implement the vision and goals for the commercial corridor/district that are identified through the planning process. A few of these strategies include (but are not limited to) the following:

Branding

The shared vision for the commercial corridor/district, defined through the planning process, can be translated into a logo and a concise slogan that can be used to promote the district internally and externally.

Business attraction

A vibrant neighborhood retail district offers residents and visitors access to a diverse assortment of goods and services that meet their needs. Business attraction campaigns determine the needs of their community and which types of businesses would thrive there. By bringing new business to their corridors, diversifying the retail mix and filling retail vacancies, they encourage more investment in their community.

Facade improvement program

Physical improvements to storefronts add aesthetic and economic value to the commercial corridor, attracting more customers and increasing sales as well as encouraging new businesses to locate in a particular district. Some communities

have initiated successful programs that create incentives—such as rebates—for business owners to improve their facades, awnings, and signage.

Increase access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable foods

In emerging or struggling commercial corridors/districts, one of the most common unmet needs of nearby residents is access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable food, within a reasonable distance and accessible by multiple transportation modes. Farmers markets and alternative food retail outlets are among the strategies that can be used for this purpose and can serve as demonstration programs to expand the diversity of retail options.

Merchant organizing

Merchant associations enable individual business owners to collaborate on a variety of activities that will promote their business, beautify their district, educate consumers and merchants, and, ultimately, increase sales revenue.

Placemaking

To be successful, commercial corridors/districts need to be recognized by consumers as excellent places to shop, work, and do business. “Placemaking” is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces that capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well-being—attractive to

RECOMMENDATIONS: POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

nearby residents and workers, as well as potential visitors, including shoppers.

Special Service Area (SSA)

A Special Service Area (SSA), Illinois' equivalent of a Business Improvement District (BID), is a public/private partnership in which property and business owners elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development, and promotion of their commercial district within a defined boundary. SSAs can provide a sustainable and community-led mechanism to build clean, safe, and desirable commercial districts.

Streetscape improvements

Streetscape improvements are significant investments in street paving, sidewalk improvements, street lighting, directional signs, tree boxes and planters, benches, trash receptacles. Such improvements can have a dramatic impact on the appearance, safety, and use of a neighborhood commercial corridor/district.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district

Tax Increment Financing can help municipalities promote economic development by creating a special district during a development period, where the tax base is frozen at the predevelopment level (on the assumption redevelopment would not occur in the area without public investment or intervention). Property taxes continue to be paid, but taxes

derived from increases in assessed values (the tax increment) resulting from new development can be used to pay for infrastructure or other improvements within the designated area.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Engaging the community

CMAP will need to actively—and effectively—engage residents and workers in the area adjacent to the chosen commercial corridor/district. Given the demographics of Waukegan, it is likely that this will involve engaging the Latino community. Due to language barriers and other factors, involving the Latino community in local planning processes has been a challenge in the past—throughout our region, and nationwide. CMAP has been working in recent years to engage Spanish-speaking residents in planning for the future of their neighborhoods, municipalities, and region, and has hired outreach staff that specializes in reaching the Latino community. Specific resources that could be applied to this project include:

- Susana Figueroa, Waukegan’s designated liaison to the Latino community, whom we interviewed for this report. Ms. Figueroa indicated her enthusiasm to assist CMAP during the planning process, if needed.
- Outreach specialists at CMAP have previously worked with stakeholders from Waukegan’s Latino community. In addition, City staff in Waukegan has experience engaging the Latino community, working with large Spanish-speaking church congregations.
- MetroQuest is an online community-engagement tool that CMAP uses to communicate with residents and other stakeholders about planning initiatives. It is

customized to the needs of each project, and gives individuals the opportunity to rank planning priorities, indicate on a planning area map where they would like to see changes or improvements, provide written feedback, to specify demographic information about themselves (such as community role, age, gender, zip code of residence), and to receive project updates. CMAP would create a MetroQuest site that was customized to the needs of Waukegan project, perhaps including a Spanish language version.

- Lessons drawn from upcoming project in the Village of Hanover Park, in which a team of economic development experts will identify strategies to build upon the strengths of existing multi-ethnic small businesses located along a struggling commercial corridor. The project is being led by the Urban Land Institute, in partnership with CMAP.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Other recommendations

Homes for a Changing Region is best-suited to address Waukegan's many important housing-related problems.

Led by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Metropolitan Planning Council, and CMAP, Homes for a Changing Region is a program that identifies specific local, regional, and state strategies to address imbalances in northeastern Illinois' housing stock. Through extensive data analysis and discussion with municipal staff, elected officials, and residents through a transparent community engagement process, the program encourages neighboring communities to work together to develop interjurisdictional solutions to existing and projected housing challenges.

Since 2005, Homes for a Changing Region has worked with clusters of communities throughout the Chicago region. (It is currently working with Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Mount Prospect, Palatine, and Rolling Meadows.) Following initial discussions with Mayor Sabonjian and mayors of neighboring communities, the project leadership has tentatively planned for a project—involving Waukegan and approximately three or four of its neighbors—for 2013. If Waukegan and its neighboring communities choose to proceed, the project would be pursued without cost to the City, with resources committed through the Local Technical Assistance program and from other funders.

The College of Lake County is an underutilized asset, with potential to help Waukegan address multiple problems.

CLC's upcoming expansion will bring an increase in students attending its new programs, which will include nursing and culinary arts. Through partnerships and wise planning, this has the potential to bring new life to Waukegan's downtown. Coordination between CLC and organizations in the area could help address Waukegan's growing need for workforce development. If this is of interest to the City, CMAP could play a facilitation role in engaging with CLC (which is a partner of CMAP's on a number of ongoing projects) as well as seeking support from outside funders for a joint initiative.

Next steps

Approval of Local Technical Assistance planning priorities report

1. CMAP forwards draft of Local Technical Assistance program planning priorities report to Mayor and City Council.
2. CMAP presents and discusses draft report with City Council.

If there is consensus, City Council may seek a resolution approving the report's recommendation, enabling scoping of commercial corridor/district planning process to proceed.

Otherwise, CMAP will make changes to report requested by City Council, forward revised report to Mayor and City Council, and seek approval at next available meeting of the Council.

Develop scope of work

1. Working with relevant City staff—and in consultation with Mayor and alderman representing the project planning area—CMAP develops scope of work and detailed planning process for, along with Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
2. CMAP forwards draft scope of work and MOU to City Council, and seeks approval at next available Council meeting.

Once approval is granted and MOU is signed, CMAP and City proceed with commercial corridor/district planning project.